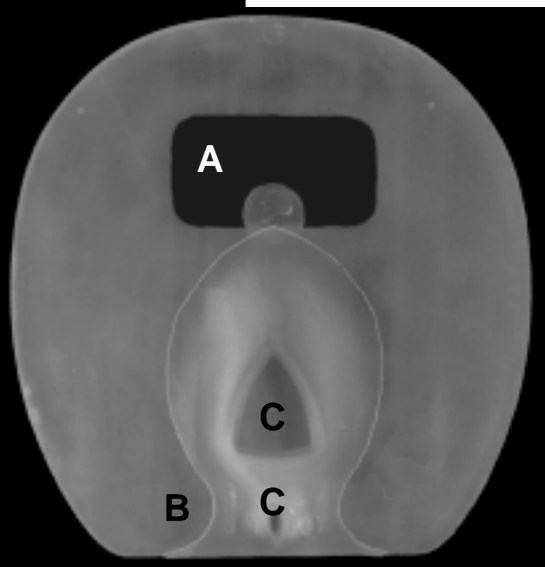


Natural Hoof Prints



Volume 4, Issue 1

Spring 2002



THE NATURAL BALANCE PAD

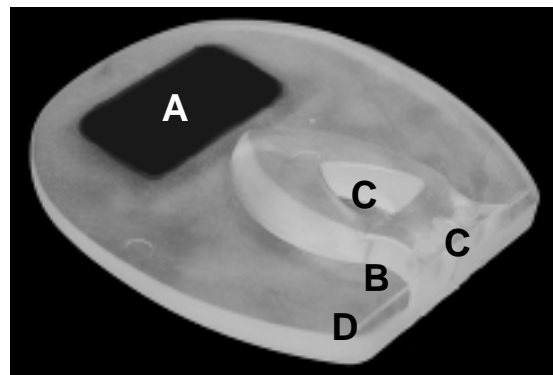
"It's clearly the window to the horse's sole!"

The all new Natural Balance Pad is a revolutionary tool that aids in the necessary biomechanics of the foot. The pad can be used with or without Impression Material and in conjunction with the Natural Balance Shoes. This pad is designed to do a number of tasks, such as:

the frog. When used in loose dirt environments, these voids will also allow some dirt to collect there and provide some dirt-to-dirt traction. The final feature that seems relatively minor, but is actually quite critical is the shoe fitting ridge located near the back of the pad (D). This feature allows you to back the heels of the shoe to that ridge, but not all the way to back of the pad. This will ensure that a small amount of the pad and frog piece will stick out behind the heels of the shoe to better assist in the heel contact and support transfer to the proprioceptors located in the frog buttress.

- **Support the Frog**
- **Stimulate Proprioception**
- **Dissipate Energy**
- **Promote a Heel-First Landing**
- **Align the Distal Phalanges**
- **Improve Circulation**
- **Promote Heel Expansion**

The NB Pad is made of a durable, opaque Urethane that is formulated to provide the optimal amount of flex and rigidity. The crystal clear window (A) located just ahead of the frog piece allows the user to accurately place the shoe and pad relative to the frog. (as David Nicholls from England says, "It's the window to the horse's sole...") The relieved heel section (B) allows you to bring the heels of the shoe in when treating contracted heels and the upright wall of the frog insert in the back allows dirt to pack between the shoe and the frog piece as well. This helps to supply full support across the caudal part of the foot. Moreover, the frog piece gradually tapers as it approaches the apex to allow the pad to clean in the anterior part of the foot. You will also notice specially located cutouts or voids in the frog piece (C) that replicate the central sulcus and the less dense mid section of the frog. These features allow the pad to flex and transfer support in a way that mimics the natural biomechanical function of



There are several key differences between this pad and the EDSS Pad. First and most important, this pad does not contain the stainless steel insert that is critical in the EDSS Pad to eliminate the chance of sole pressure or the chance of causing a pressure necrosis beneath the tip of P3 in severe laminitis and founder cases. Second, this pad does not allow for the ability to adjust the support through the frog via the frog inserts.

A few possible application of this pad may include:

- Contracted Heels
- Poor Quality Frogs
- Navicular-like Symptoms
- Negative P3 Angle
- Weak, Narrow Frogs
- Toe-First Landings
- Minor Lameness Problems
- Caudal Heel Pain

These pads are currently available in 4 different versions; the **REGULAR** size pad fits shoes sizes 00 - 2 and the **LARGE** size pad fits shoe sizes 2 - 6, and each size comes in either a flat or wedged version. The **REGULAR** pads sell for \$9.95/pair and the **LARGE** pads sell for \$12.95/pair.

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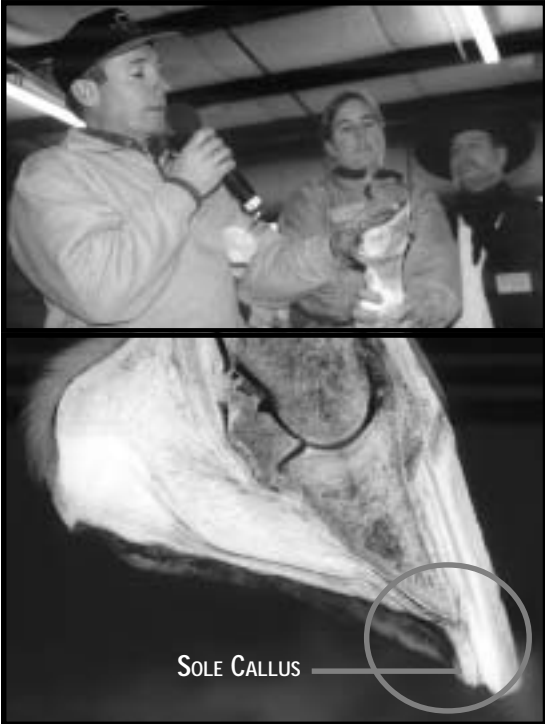
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SoundFest 2002 - Emerald Downs, Washington

By Dawn Jenkins

*SoundFest Speakers
Mark Plumlee,
Patty Stiller &
Richard Caldwell
discuss the
importance of the
preservation of the
sole callus...*



This hoof model shows a good example of the sole callus. You can image the damage that can be done by removing the protective sole material on this particularly thin soled foot...

Where can you go to meet and share with Natural Balance Farriers from around the country—no, make that the world—and learn more about treating those difficult-to-almost-impossible lameness and conformationally distorted horses that make you lose sleep at night? Why SoundFest, of course.

Sponsored by Mark Plumlee and the Mission Farrier School, SoundFest is rapidly becoming **THE** Natural Balance event of the year. Traditionally held the last week of March, this was the fourth event in so many years, every one bigger and better than

the previous. This year there were over one hundred participants.

The format of SoundFest is split between lectures and live remedial shoeing of lameness cases. The horses are worked on by teams of farriers and veterinarians who are taking the hands-on portion of the event. Radiographs are taken before and often times after the work, and certain horses might also receive chiropractic, acupuncture or other therapies.

This year's SoundFest had a variety of challenging horses including high/low, navicular syndrome, laminitis, and several with conformational and limb distortions. A live video camera recorded highlights of the action and projected the images onto a series of TV monitors overhead—a microphoned sound system made sure everyone could hear. The Emerald Down complex, a newly built Racetrack south of Seattle, was a superb facility with a large lecture hall and adjoining enclosed arena.

Dr. Kerry Ridgway on Chiropractic

Dr. Ridgway presented an informative presentation on Chiropractic care for horses.

Chiropractic focuses on the relationship between structure and function and is about optimizing health. It works on nerve pathways, especially in the spine. When spinal joints lack appropriate motion, the nerve root becomes inflamed and can cause pain, muscle spasms, edema, and adhesions. This also adds to muscle tension, imbalance, asymmetry, and overall lack of performance.

It was fascinating to listen to Dr. Ridgway's description of an adjustment: "I am adjusting the joints, and a joint takes only a *tiny* amount of actual pressure to adjust." The skill is in knowing the subtle nuisances of diagnostics and adjustment, not force. This is why it is best to have a fully trained, licensed Chiropractor do the work, and of course veterinary knowledge is also very helpful. Indeed, the horses that Dr. Ridgway demonstrated his techniques on immediately showed their release of tension by licking or yawning in response to the adjustments.

Farrier Presentations

Gene Ovnicek presented the opening lecture on trimming and shoeing with Natural Balance principles and applying wild horse research to domestic horses. Afterwards, Gene fielded questions that were posed by the many seasoned Natural Balance farriers in the audience. One was about a big halter horse with very long feet, how would you get the feet shorter? Gene suggested hot seating, which he also employs on flat feet to encourage cupping. Hot seat and let the foot cool over again about three times. The heat seems to help the foot recover and redefine itself, and after a few shoeings the foot will change.

Gene feels that sometimes these longer feet are sole-bound because they were taken too short in the past. "Mother Nature needs to protect PIII and the foot will grow profusely to do so." He has seen these types of feet let go and release all the sole when the foot is ready. One farrier said he likes to trim less and hot seat more for better overall results.

Another discussion regarded angular limb deformities—what to do with a horse that hits lateral side first, for example. Patty Stiller pointed out that an AP radiograph of a horse

she worked on showed a malformed PI and PII; one side of the bones were longer than the other. This caused PIII to be longer and all joints set at an angle. "This horse will land hard on the lateral side no matter what you do," Patty concluded.

On horses that can't put their leg straight out to the hoof stand—the leg twists medially, for example—Gene has found there isn't much to do to change them. Over-trimming the outside of the foot will further distort the joints, and they won't ever land flat due to joint irregularities. Whereas those horses that hit outside first and *can* put the leg straight to the hoof stand, can be helped by trimming.

Mark Plumlee lectured about foot basics. Mark feels a simple wire brush and felt-tipped marker are the most important tools in his box! By wire brushing the sole and mapping the foot first, the structures of the foot are easier to preserve and define. In the Western Washington area where Mark works, the ultra-wet environment is challenging on horse's feet. Mark considers minimizing hoof distortion as the number one goal of farriery. "We must use Mother Nature as a guide. It is important to develop *feel*, not just a formula. The needs of the horse must be considered on an individual basis, as every horse lives in a different spot and has different performance expectations."

Patty Stiller of California presented a lecture and slide presentation on heels and utilizing the caudal portion of the hoof. Patty reminded us to start with the back of the foot and work forward, also to trust the sole plane of the foot. Especially in clubfooted horses, start in the back of the foot or you could end up in trouble. She also reminded us to check for subtle clues like bulges in the wall to help figure out what's going on inside the foot.

Richard Caldwell, a performance reigning and cow horse

specialist from California, told us about the challenges of shoeing horses for three different events that are done on three types of ground—all with the same set of shoes. Richard likes aluminum Natural Balance shoes for the fronts, and he employs sliders on the hinds using Natural Balance principles. He likes the traction of the aluminum NBS shoe, that the horse can reach well with it as well as push and pull off the ground.

British farrier **David Nicholls** gave a talk on Navicular Disease. David made a distinction between Navicular Disease and Navicular Syndrome, which is associated with "intersection area pain." The horses with Navicular Syndrome have pain in the mid-frog and heel area, and most have impar ligament damage.

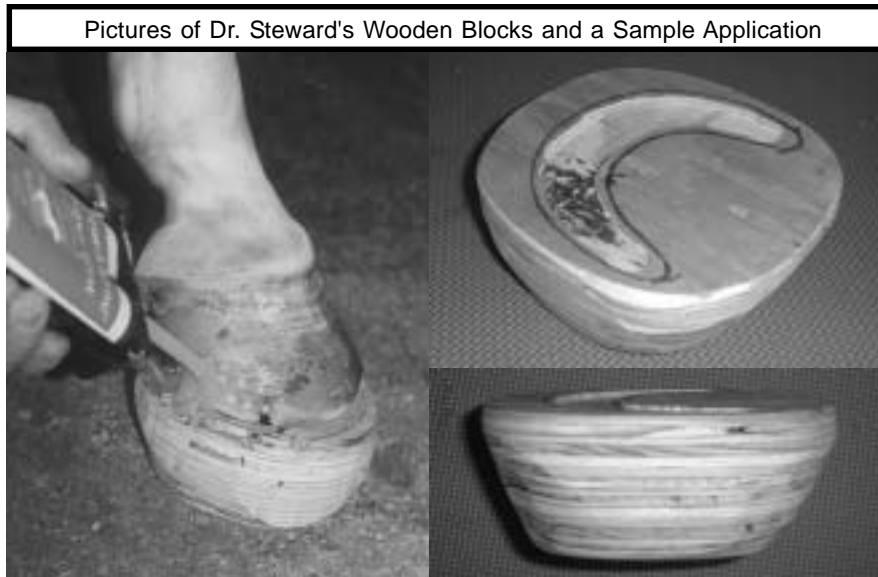
Most of David's client horses with Navicular Syndrome are sound and back to work, but must remain in an EDSS system. In all his years of working with one of England's top equine hospitals, very few horses have had the actual Navicular Disease, a disease of the bone. All horses with the actual disease had to be put down.

Live Shoeing of Lameness Cases

The hands-on teams addressed numerous severe lameness cases during the course of the four days. Gene demonstrated a couple new treatments for laminitis, including a set of wooden blocks that were used on a refractory laminitic pony named Oreo. (*The Wooden Block Treatment is compliments of Dr. Mike Steward of Oklahoma.*) The blocks are about three inches high, and can be made higher or lower by adding extra wedges or removing some

"We must use Mother Nature as a guide. It is important to develop feel, not just a formula..."

Pictures of Dr. Steward's Wooden Blocks and a Sample Application



SoundFest 2002 - Continued

of the plywood layers. Upon experimentation, Oreo was fitted with the blocks that were first taped and then glued in place with Super-Fast Vettec glue. The height offers some relief from the typical laminitic stance, and a half-moon shaped routed-out notch in the top of the block allows pressure relief for PIII. In a follow-up phone call three weeks later, Oreo was happy in the blocks. He's been a tricky pony to keep happy, and the owner appreciated the new approach.

Gene Ovnicsek also showed us how to apply a shoe to a foundered horse that is impossible to nail. The foot is prepared to normal specifications, with impression material.

Vaseline is applied to the heel bulbs as protection from the glue, and the side walls of the hoof are built-out with Vettec Super-Fast glue. Then, an aluminum Natural Balance EDSS shoe that has a special welded cuff is screwed into the glue, affixing the shoe. These custom cuffed shoes and the wooden laminitis blocks are available from Equine Digit Support Systems.

Another horse, a rescued Arabian named Busy that had spent its entire life in a stall, had terrible conformation issues that required three types of shoeing approaches. High/low heels, and windswept, Busy had major angular limb deformities. The farrier/vet team that tackled the horse did an incredible job with the crooked legs and gait irregularities, and the horse trotted out a new animal.

SoundFest 2003

If you feel stumped by soundness issues in your everyday practice, if you want to meet other NBS farriers or vets to bounce off ideas, or if you just have a hankering to increase your understanding about Natural Balance principles, mark your calendars for the last week in March, 2003. SoundFest is the place for you! Contact Mission Farrier School: 425-898-7757.



Lateral view of Busy's front feet after the farrier/vet team was finished.



Lateral view of Busy's hind feet after the farrier/vet team was finished.



Rear view of Busy's hind feet after the farrier/vet team was finished. Adjustments with the EDSS Parts is key to dial-in on the comfort level of these horses.

Application of the EDSS Cuff Shoe for those horses that are difficult to nail to because of poor quality hoof wall.

Negative Plane P3's & Prolapsed Frogs *By Gene Ovnicek*

There are many subtle lameness issues that are not easily recognized until they become acute at the problem site or become painful in a referred area of the body. Typically foot problems affect more than one area of the upper body. It is quite common with observant owners and equine caretakers, farriers included, to see and recognize stiffness in the rear quarters when lifting and positioning the leg to the rear for examination of the foot, or for trimming and shoeing. Stiffness with normal manipulation should alert you to further investigation of a potential problem. Frequently horses that are reluctant to freely manipulate the hind limb for shoeing or trimming exhibit pain in the back over the loin. They can show discomfort in the hocks and stifles as well. If these symptoms exist, I suggest that a healthcare professional be called upon to help fully and accurately diagnose any structural defects. In many cases of rear leg stiffness and sacroiliac pain, the foot shows consistent features of distortion and malfunction as well. When examining the foot closely from the side (lateral view), there is commonly a crown or arch to the dorsal hoof wall. (Fig. A) This often corresponds with heels that are very unstable and appear to crumble easily under the weight and movement. Along with what seems to be poor heels, the frog is very large and has descended through the shoe to meet the ground. With hoof tester examination, a positive response is common in the sole behind the widest part of the foot, through the heels and occasionally over the frog. Irregardless of the pain response from the hoof testers (painful or pain free), the discomfort that exists when manipulating the limb, the dorsal wall arch and the prolapsed (enlarged) frog are the main indicators that lead to suspicion of a negative P3 plane. (Fig. B) This means that the bottom surface of P3 that is normally elevated slightly more in the rear than in the front (2° - 5°) or in some cases parallel, is actually closer to the ground in the rear of the bone than in the front. The cause of this condition is speculated by many to be a genetic weakness of soft tissue that supports the back half of P3 (ie; digital cushion, lateral cartilage, etc.). As well, one could logically suspect that the situation is created by trying to leave heels tall to achieve pastern alignment to raise the angle. This approach is clearly responsible for an unhealthy under-run heel condition that causes severely curved bars and curved heels that crumble under the weight of

the animal. In addition, low level pain, bruising and abscessing are often the result of this practice and seems to validate an unwillingness for the horse to land heel first.

The enlarged frog is a natural response by the foot to supply support to the back of P3 when the normal structures are not available to service those duties. Typically in this situation, the frog is very healthy and is level with the ground through the shoe at the end of the shoeing period.

Treatment Procedure

With a better understanding of the condition and how Mother Nature is involved in the treatment, one can become involved in a complimentary protocol. Allowing a horse to be barefoot is one way of supporting P3 by allowing the frog to fully load, hence fill the area of soft tissue in the rear of the foot beneath the back portion of P3. This works well for some of the cases.

Many feet in moist areas with this condition will only widen when the increased support of the enlarged frog is being compressed within the back of the foot. Only temporary results are seen and in time the condition can return. In these marginal barefoot attempts, the use of shoes and a hard Multi-Purpose plate are the first in a series of treatment procedures.

It is not uncommon for a horse to be uncomfortable standing once the shoe is removed and the heels are trimmed to the level of the live sole. Properly preparing the bars and heels to the Natural Balance standards is necessary for reconstruction of the back of the foot. The discomfort is occasionally experienced temporarily I assure you, but is

Lateral View of a negative plane coffin bone & prolapsed frog.

Figure A

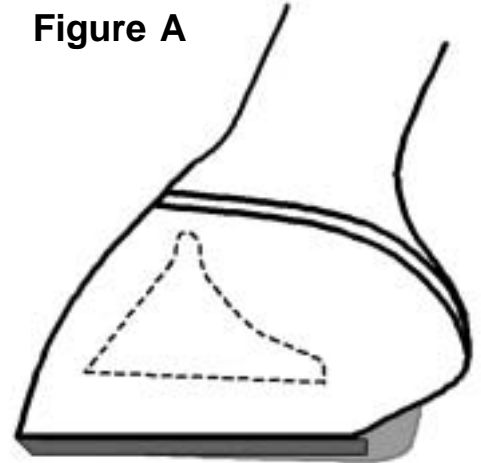
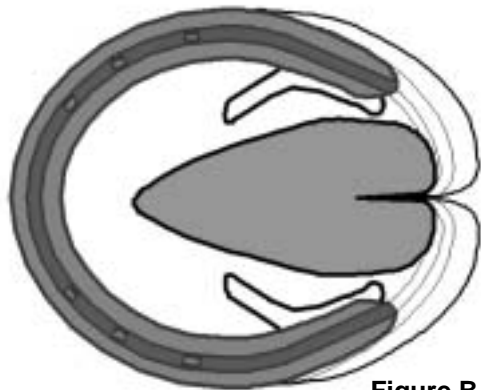


Figure B



Bottom View of Prolapsed Frog (one indication of a negative plane coffin bone).

Negative Plane P3... - Continued

required to improve the situation. The mistake commonly made by most farriers, myself included, is to not allow the frog to be loaded, hence, exacerbating the condition. It works best if the horse can be left barefoot and housed in a confined area on a flat, firm surface for a period of 24 to 48 hours until the frog is repositioned comfortably within the foot. The original discomfort will disappear within hours.

An aluminum NBS, steel NBS, or EDSS shoes, along with the Multi-Purpose plate works well for the initial application after the 24 to 48 hour adjustment period. An Elite Hind steel shoe is best suited for hind feet applications, along with a Multi-purpose plate. I find that Sole Pack works best as a filler beneath the pad, the reason being is that the frog has to continue to deviate and conform to its new position within the back of the foot. If Impression Material is used on the first shoeing, the frog would be limited in its ability to deform properly and comfortably. The shoe and pad can be secured with as many nails as necessary, including nails used behind the widest part of the foot. A heel first landing is generally seen with the first shoeing, if not immediately, then generally within a few days. If the horse fails to land heel first within a few days, elevation with rails or wedge pads may be necessary to achieve these goals.

With a heel first landing and regular work, much of the back pain and rear leg stiffness is reduced, and in many cases eliminated. Over the

next 2 or 3 shoeings at 6 to 8 week intervals, Impression Material and NBS Pads can be used as the next level of treatment.

Additional applications using the Multi-Purpose Plates will be discussed in the next issue of "Natural Hoof Prints."

Figure C

1. Push the frog back up into the foot.
2. Digital Cushion & Lateral Cartilage lift the back of P3 and cause the extensor process to move forward.
3. You can now safely trim the heels back relative to the live sole and place breakover 1/4" ahead of the tip of P3.
4. The bullnose dorsal hoof wall should NOT be rasped. In time the wall will resume a more straight conformation from the coronary band to the toe.

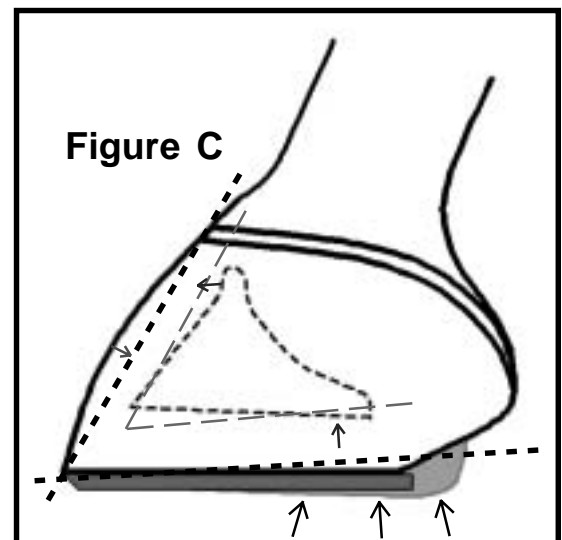
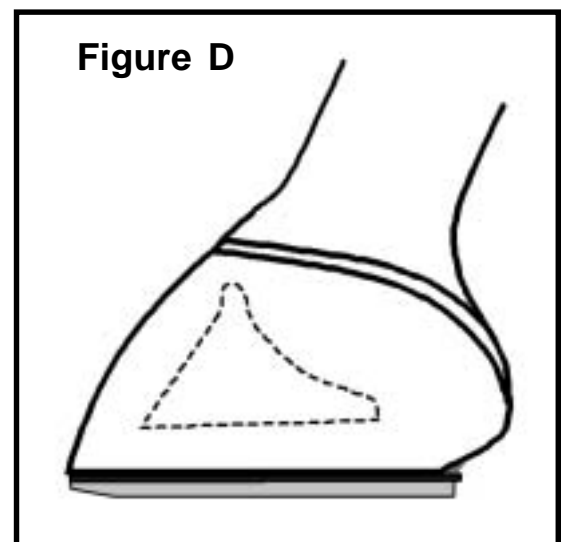


Figure D

Post shoeing lateral view with Multi-Purpose plate and Natural Balance Shoe. Over the next few shoeings, the heels will regrow more upright and the bullnose dorsal hoof wall will resume a straighter conformation from top to bottom.





EQUINE LAMINITIS

by Dr Chris Pollitt PhD

Available in the US Spring '02
100 pg; 70+ color photos

One of the **world's leading researchers on laminitis and founder** in horses has assembled a handbook for disease prevention and management! Chapters on **anatomy,**

causes, the new **glucose** theory, clinical signs, **radiography,**

medications, shoeing, and prognosis. Covers **vasodilation and vasoconstriction** theories as well as his own new **enzymatic (MMP)** theory. Extensive details on **heart bar shoes, glue-ons, EDSS.** This book helps **owners** understand the disease at a more in-depth level. For **vets and farriers,** this book is a high-quality "trash course" in state-of-the-art laminitis theory and practice. Cost is **\$25 + \$5** post per book in the USA; \$25 + \$6 post in Canada; **hoofCARE** \$25 + \$10 post elsewhere. Call to order or use web **hoofCARE** site: (USA) 978 281 3222

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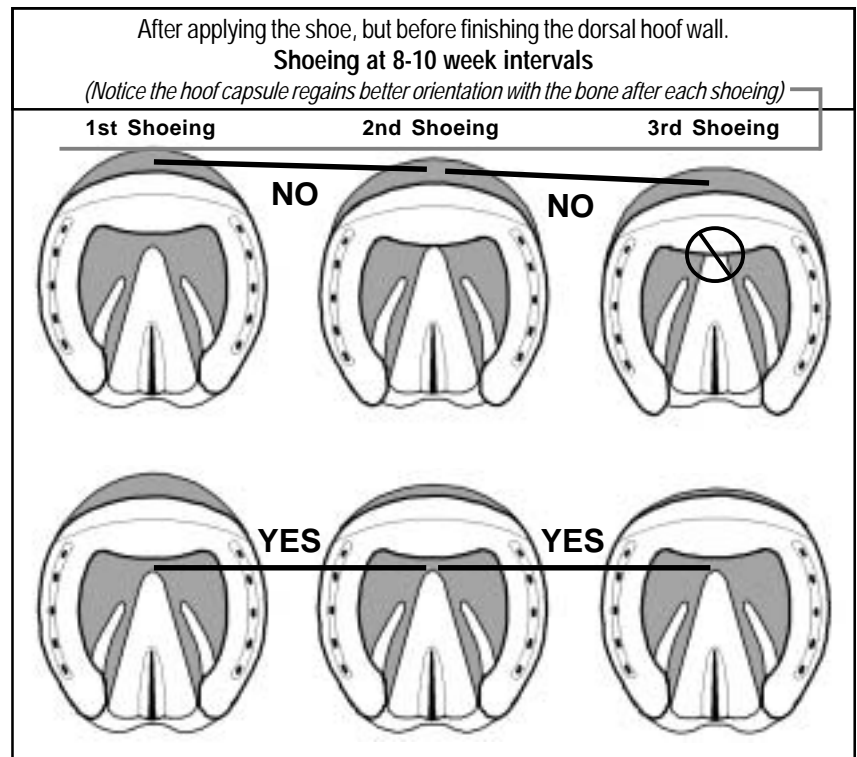
Losing Track - by Gene Ovnicek

The use of the Natural Balance Shoes has established a favorable position in the farrier industry in the few years since they were introduced in 1996. For some farriers, acceptance of the appearance from owners, trainers and the like are a few of the hurdles they've had to overcome. On the other hand, there are a number of veterinarians, trainers and caring horse owners who insist their farrier use Natural Balance Shoes. As you can imagine, the farrier that is forced to use the NBS, with a preconceived notion that they will not work, is seldom disappointed. The reasons for their *successful failures* are generally three fold and what they think will happen generally does. A perfect example is when they are accustomed to trimming close over the sole and finishing the dorsal wall back to the shoe, account for the bulk of the Natural Balance Shoeing failures. With some, even those who approach this procedure open-mindedly, things may go well for the first two or three shoeings before they are faced with an undesirable result or failure.

We have noticed over the years that some farriers, who focus on fitting shoes to the perimeter of the hoof wall, find it difficult to change their focus to the frog or sole callus. Many farriers operate on habit for the most part with many foot issues. Occasionally with severely distorted feet that require $\frac{1}{2}$ ", $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" of foot left beyond the shoe with the first shoeing (using the World Race Plate or NBS), some farriers will focus on the amount of toe beyond the shoe and not the distance from the frog to the inside border of the shoe. As a rule, the horse does well, as long as they are not trimmed too close or have too much dorsal wall rasped. Problems however, can manifest in the next shoeing or two if the shoe is again placed behind the toe the same amount as it was the first shoeing. With feet that were grossly distorted, the hoof wall is run forward and the heels are run under. Trimming the foot using Natural Balance guidelines and placing the shoe accordingly, will begin to reorient the hoof wall to P3. Hence, the distortion is drastically reduced the next time the horse is shod. The heels are not running forward as much and the toe is not being pulled forward as well. If the shoe is placed behind the toe of the foot the same amount as the previous shoeing, the point

of breakover may be too close to the tip of P3. Some horses may do alright with the breakover directly under the tip of P3, but some will not. If the shoe is placed a third time the same distance behind the toe, the point of breakover may well be behind the tip of P3. Again, the odd horse may not complain about the breakover being placed in that manner. However, for every one that does well, there will be three that will not do well, and there will be one that can become sore in the joints and even in the knees.

To avoid these problems, we always encourage NBS users to stay focused on the frog and sole callus for shoe placement. For the odd horse that likes his breakover behind the tip of P3, we use the Aluminum NBS and leave them on as long as is necessary to find the optimal point of breakover for him. In these unique cases you **must** stay focused on the heels as they are responding to the change in breakover. Keep in mind that once the breakover is placed appropriately for the individual foot, the heel will grow in a different direction. **Trimming the heel will always need to be done with respect to the live sole.**



Just Released!

"ESSENTIAL HOOF CARE" Video

-A Horse Owner's Guide to Preventing Lameness & Improving Performance -

Over 45 Minutes of useful tools and information to help horse owners, trainers, farriers and vets evaluate minor lameness & Pre-Navicular Syndrome before the problem becomes irreversible. This video helps to answer many horse owner's questions about breakover, caudal support, foot fall evaluation, stumbling, forging, interfering, horse's being off after shoeing and most importantly recognizing hoof deformity and how they can work with their farrier and vet to prevent future lameness and improve the overall performance of the horse.

Tons of Information for only \$39.95

UPCOMING
CLINICS
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Oct. 11 - 13

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University
Oct. 23 - 25

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Nov. 2 - 3

Equine Affaire
Massachusetts
Nov. 7 - 10

Weekly EDSS Bargains

To show our appreciation to all of our customers, we are starting a "Bargain-of-the-Week" program so that with a little planning, you will be able to get the same products you already order at a discounted price. Below is a list of the items that will be a special price and the week in which that price is good for.

Natural Balance Pads - 10% Off - Aug. 19th - 23rd

EDSS Shoes - 15% Off - Aug. 26th - 30th

EDSS Wedge Rails - 15% Off - Sept. 9th - 13th

EDSS Pads - 15% Off - Sept. 23rd - 27th

EDSS Frog Inserts - 15% Off - Oct. 7th - 11th

Styrofoam Support Blocks - 15% Off - Oct. 21st - 25th

All specials are only for the week listed, starting with orders made at 8:00 a.m. Monday until 5:00 p.m. Friday. **No Exceptions!** The discount percentage is applied to the "Regular" or "Quantity" price, depending on the number of items you order.

MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Other News & Updates

It has been a while since the last issue of "Natural Hoof Prints", primarily due to the amount of time it has taken to get relocated to Colorado and get set up in our new facility. Never-the-less, we are back on track and will be committed to sending out 4 issues of this newsletter each year. Since our move to Colorado, we have made several additions to our product line and made some enhancements to a few of our other products. We have just finished a new catalog that includes some of the new products like the "Elite" Natural Balance Hind Shoes and the *soon to be available* PolySteel (Urethane) Natural Balance Shoes. We have also added the 3 in-between sizes of the EDSS treatment shoes, so there are now 6 sizes total: **SMALL/00, 0, MEDIUM/1, 2, LARGE/3 & 4:**

You can call us and have us send you the latest catalog and price list, or you can download the latest catalog from the website ("Tech Support" section then "Downloads" page). If you haven't had a chance to check out the "Natural Balance Tutorial" on the website, please do. We have had a tremendous response from farriers, vets and horse owners about how informative and useful the tutorial has been. Please check it out!

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